

The Making of a Cultural Landscape: The English Lake District as Tourist Destination, 1750-2010, ed. John K. Walton and Jason Wood

Donaldson, Christopher

DOI:

[10.1093/ehr/cev123](https://doi.org/10.1093/ehr/cev123)

License:

Other (please specify with Rights Statement)

Document Version

Peer reviewed version

Citation for published version (Harvard):

Donaldson, C 2015, 'The Making of a Cultural Landscape: The English Lake District as Tourist Destination, 1750-2010, ed. John K. Walton and Jason Wood', *English Historical Review*. <https://doi.org/10.1093/ehr/cev123>

[Link to publication on Research at Birmingham portal](#)

Publisher Rights Statement:

This is a pre-copyedited, author-produced PDF of an article accepted for publication in *English Historical Review* following peer review. The version of record is available online at: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/ehr/cev123>.

Eligibility for repository checked May 2015

General rights

Unless a licence is specified above, all rights (including copyright and moral rights) in this document are retained by the authors and/or the copyright holders. The express permission of the copyright holder must be obtained for any use of this material other than for purposes permitted by law.

- Users may freely distribute the URL that is used to identify this publication.
- Users may download and/or print one copy of the publication from the University of Birmingham research portal for the purpose of private study or non-commercial research.
- User may use extracts from the document in line with the concept of 'fair dealing' under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 (?)
- Users may not further distribute the material nor use it for the purposes of commercial gain.

Where a licence is displayed above, please note the terms and conditions of the licence govern your use of this document.

When citing, please reference the published version.

Take down policy

While the University of Birmingham exercises care and attention in making items available there are rare occasions when an item has been uploaded in error or has been deemed to be commercially or otherwise sensitive.

If you believe that this is the case for this document, please contact UBIRA@lists.bham.ac.uk providing details and we will remove access to the work immediately and investigate.

The Making of a Cultural Landscape: The English Lake District as Tourist

Destination, 1750-2010, ed. John K. Walton, and Jason Wood (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013; pp. xv+276. £70.00).

This collection offers a detailed account of the role that tourism has played in shaping the heritage, culture, and identity of the Lake District and, more broadly, Cumbria over the past two-hundred and sixty years. Varied in its contents and interdisciplinary in its approach, the book provides valuable commentaries not only on the social, environmental, and economic history of the Lake District, but also on the conservation, marketing, and land management strategies that continue to affect the region in the present day. Whilst thus being a resource that will no doubt aid future research, it is also a document of the present moment and has deliberately been published at a time when authorities within the Lake District National Park are resubmitting their bid to achieve UNESCO World Heritage Site status.

The book comprises twelve chapters contributed by a host of historians, critics, and heritage experts, and is subdivided into three interrelated sections. The first of these sections opens with two chapters, contributed by Susan Denyer and John K. Walton, which serve, in lieu of an introduction, to set the stage for the rest of the book. As Denyer and Walton stress, the recent World Heritage Site proposal provides an exceptional context for critical reflection on the cultural geography of the Lake District and, accordingly, on the compound influence of nature and human intervention in shaping the region's ecology. Key here, as both authors indicate, is how the UNESCO bid underscores the Lake District's status as a cultural landscape: an area of 'outstanding universal value' distinguished by an exemplary history of human interaction with the natural environment.

Together, Denyer's and Walton's chapters delineate five distinct processes of human interaction that have been integral to the heritage of the Lakes – agro-pastoral management, picturesque improvement, industrial development, ecological conservation, and governmental regulation – each of which is subsequently explored at greater length throughout the book. In the third chapter, for example, Angus Winchester surveys the long history of agricultural, pastoral, and attendant industries in the greater Lakes region, emphasizing how the 'wild' landscape that first attracted tourists to the area in the eighteenth century was, in fact, a landscape shaped by human hands. This discussion of the influence of the pre-modern settlement and cultivation of the Lakeland region is followed by a second chapter from John K. Walton, who, in turn, documents how the interplay of industry and the environment has continued to inform the experiences of tourists unto the present day. Melanie Hall's chapter, which rounds off the first section of the book, addresses the paradigmatic role of the district in strengthening Anglo-American cultural relations during the Victorian era and, in the process, the national parks movement in the UK and the United States.

The narrative recounted in Hall's chapter – which draws attention to how the works of local luminaries, such as William Wordsworth and Robert Southey, attracted tourists to the district – is developed further in the second section of the book, which includes four chapters devoted to examining specific 'tourist themes'. The first of these, by Keith Hanley, offers an analysis of the emergence of literary tourism in the Lake District, detailing how the identification of the 'Lake poets' with the region emerged out of, and gradually superseded, the earlier tradition of picturesque tourism. The vicissitudes of the picturesque also figure prominently in Adam Menuge's chapter, which traces the history of the villas and ornamental gardens that wealthy

industrialists began building round the district during the latter half of the eighteenth century. Though initially designed as private pleasure grounds for the elite, as Menuge explains, many of these estates came to serve as accommodation – both as rental properties and hotels – for a broader public as the market for holidaymaking in Britain spread down the social scale. The changing demographics of Lakeland tourism in the nineteenth-century also figures centrally in Jonathan Westaway's chapter, which assesses how mountaineering and rock climbing contributed to the emergence of the Lake District as a destination for the urban middle-classes during the late Victorian period. Complementing this consideration of the role of sport and outdoor pursuits in motivating tourism is Mike Huggins and Keith Gregson's co-authored chapter, which examines the influence of athletic recreation and local sporting events, such as Grasmere Sports, on the holiday experience of Lakeland visitors in the twentieth century.

The final section of the book presents three chapter-length case studies of specific sites and places. The first of these, by Sarah Rutherford, draws attention to Claife Station, near Windermere, as an architectural artefact of the picturesque movement. The second, by Jason Wood, surveys the history of Furness Abbey, documenting how this former centre of monastic power grew from a remote site of antiquarian interest to become a major tourist destination during the railway age. The third case study, contributed by David Cooper, offers an insightful assessment of the post-industrial peripheries of the Lake District National Park, suggesting that seemingly marginal communities, such as the old iron town of Millom, should be central to thinking about the heritage of the region today.

Collectively, this book thus covers a wider variety of topics than any previous study of the Lake District. Though not a comprehensive account (one would, for

instance, like to have seen greater attention paid to key historical figures, such as Jonathan Otley, and to certain topics, such as local agricultural shows), the book is nonetheless an excellent resource for students of landscape and environmental history, and should be essential reading for all researchers interested in the literature, culture, and heritage of the North West of England. It is especially promising to see that many of the chapters collected here are presented as excerpts from, or distillations of, work in progress. It therefore seems likely that this collection will be not only a lasting scholarly resource, but also a seedbed from which future research will spring.

(977 words)

Christopher Donaldson